

Abstract 2nd European Headache and Migraine Trust. International Congress – EHMTIC (Nice, France, October 28-31, 2010)

Title: More is less! Medication use in patients with migraine and Medication-Overuse Headache: on the role of problem solving style and attitudes about pain medication

Excessive medication intake is believed to be a major risk factor of developing Medication-Overuse Headache (MOH), a condition characterized by an increase of headache attacks to a daily or near-daily pattern. Research focusing on the underlying psychological mechanisms of the disorder is still in its infancy and it is hardly unknown why some patients overuse their medication. In this study, we examined the value of attitudes about pain medication, especially perceived need and concerns, and problem solving style in accounting for MOH. We also sought to examine the relation of problem solving style with need for and concerns about medication. Patients with migraine (N=133) and MOH (N=42) were recruited from a tertiary headache referral center and completed a range of questionnaires measuring problem solving style and attitudes about pain medication. A problem solving style aimed at controlling pain was associated with a higher need for and concerns about medication intake. Interestingly, in a model accounting for demographic factors and pain intensity, controlling pain, need for medication and concerns about scrutiny by others because of drug intake all had a unique value in accounting for MOH. Results are discussed in terms of how a persistence in attempts at controlling pain may trigger overuse of medication, even in the presence of clear negative consequences.